

Message Text

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71

ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 NEA-10 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 SAJ-01 INRE-00

CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USSS-00 DRC-01 /158 W
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P R 162146Z OCT 73

FM USMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 252

INFO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 3974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, XF

SUBJ: TUNISIAN REACTIONS TO USG RESUPPLY EFFORTS

1. MAHMOUD MESTIRI, RECENTLY APPOINTED TUNISIAN PERMREP (BUT NOT YET IN PLACE) TOLD AF AREA ADVISOR OCTOBER 16 THAT ARABS FRIENDLY TO US NOW IN DEEP TROUBLE FOLLOWING LATEST MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS. HE SAID GOT PARTICULARLY WORRIED SINCE GOOD RELATIONS WITH US WAS BASIC PILLAR OF TUNISIAN FOREIGN POLICY. HE HOPED THIS COULD CONTINUE BUT FEARED FOR THE FUTURE.

2. MESTIRI SAID THAT HE AND FONMIN MASMOUDI HAD BEEN IN FREQUENT TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH TUNIS, AND WERE CONCERNED AT REPORTS OF UNSETTLED STATE OF TUNISIAN OPINION. TUNIS PRESS WAS "MODERATE", BUT MANY TUNISIANS LISTENING TO RADIO REPORTS FROM CAIRO AND OTHER ARAB CAPITALS. MESTIRI SAID HE PERSONALLY ACCEPTED USG EXPLANATIONS REGARDING NEW ARMS SHIPMENTS TO ISRAEL, BUT SAID THAT THESE "SOPHISTICATED EXPLANATIONS" NOT LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED EASILY BY PEOPLE.

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3. PROBLEM FURTHER COMPLICATED BY VERY HARD LINE

ISRAELIS NOW TAKING; HE REFERRED PARTICULARLY TO GOLDA MEIR SPEECH TODAY (OCTOBER 16). SADAT, ON OTHER HAND, WAS TAKING MODERATE LINE, HAD OPENED DOOR TO CEASEFIRE, AND LOOKED FOR PEACE.

4. MESTIRI ASKED IF WE HAD NEWS ON REPORTED APPOINTMENT FOR ARAB FONMINS WITH PRESIDENT NIXON (WE HAD NO NEWS). HE SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY DISCOURAGED BECAUSE MOROCCAN FONMIN BENHIMA WAS STILL AT UN INSTEAD OF IN WASHINGTON.

5. HE NOTED ALSO THAT MASMOUDI HAD WISHED SEE SECRETARY KISSINGER, AND ORIGINALLY INTENDED VISIT WASHINGTON IN NOVEMBER IF APPOINTMENT COULD BE ARRANGED. BUT NOW HE DID NOT KNOW IF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE. MASMOUDI STILL IN NEW YORK AND WOULD RPOBABLY REMAIN FOR ANOTHER WEEK.

6. MESTIRI WAS VERY SERIOUS AND CLEARLY CONCERNED THROUGHTOUT CONVERSATION, WHICH HE HIMSELF HAD INITIATED. HE SAID HE WISHED REMAIN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH USUN; PERHAPS TIME WOULD COME WHEN USG AND GOT COULD "DO SOMETHING TOGETHER."

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